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CENTRAL FAX CENTER****AUG 04 2006**REMARKS

The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 8, 2006. Claims 1, 4 to 14, and 16 to 18 are in the application, of which Claims 5 to 14 and 16 are withdrawn from consideration. Claim 1 is the sole independent claim under consideration. Claim 1 has been amended herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

The Examiner lodged an objection against the drawings for the reason that the reference numeral 100 is used to designate different parts. The objection is respectfully traversed, and has been addressed by the amendments made to the specification. In this regard, the term "(100)" set forth at page 41, line 22 and page 55, line 23 of the specification is not a reference numeral. Rather, the term "(100)" refers to the crystal alignment of silicon. Applicants respectfully submit that such would be understood by one skilled in the art.

The specification was objected to for alleged informalities. This matter has been attended to by the amendments made to the specification.

Claims 1, 4, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,171,730 (Kuroda '730) or U.S. Patent No. 6,187,482 (Kuroda '482) in view of the article entitled "Sub-diffraction-limited patterning using evanescent near-field optical lithography" (Alkaisi). Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kuroda '730 or Kuroda '482 in view of Alkaisi, further in view of U.S. Publication No. 2002/0196420 (Naya), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,566,795 (Matsuura), U.S. Patent No. 5,726,757 (Kato), U.S. Publication No. 2003/0044730 (Fujimoto), or U.S. Patent No. 6,523,748 (Nishikata). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, projecting exposure light that is polarized in a direction of an angle of approximately 45° with respect to the lengthwise directions of the opening, to generate near-field light. By virtue of this feature, near-field light that passes through the opening can have a uniform intensity.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that none of Kuroda '730, Kuroda '482, Alkaisi, Naya, Kato, Fujimoto, and Nishikata discloses or suggests at least the above-discussed feature. Kuroda '730, Kuroda '482, Alkaisi, and Naya are merely seen to describe a near-field exposure method. With respect to Kato, Fujimoto, and Nishikata, these documents are not seen to relate to near-field exposure, and as such, Applicants submit that there is no motivation to combine any of these documents with Kuroda '730, Kuroda '482, Alkaisi, or Naya. It is further respectfully submitted that there has been no showing of any indication of motivation in any of the cited documents that would lead one of ordinary skill in the art to arrive at the above-discussed feature recited by Claim 1.

The dependent claims under consideration are also submitted to be patentable because they set forth additional aspects of the present invention and are dependent from the independent claim discussed above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of each of these dependent claims is respectfully requested.

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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